

Tetserret language

Tetserret (*Tin Sert*) is a Western Berber language spoken by the Ait-Awari and Kel Eghlal Tuareg tribes of the Akoubounou (*Akabinu*) commune in Niger. This main speech area is located between Abalak, Akoubounou and Shadwanka.^[3] The variant spoken by the Kel Eghlal is called *taməsəɣlalt*. The Tamasheq equivalent *shin-sart* / *shin-sar* / *tin-sar* is used in some older literature.^[4] Popular understanding among some Ait-Awari derives the name *tet-serret*, and its Tamasheq equivalent *shin-sart*, from expressions meaning 'the (language) of Sirte'.^[5]

Tetserret is one of the last Berber languages to be recognised as distinct. As late as 1981, Bernus treated Tetserret as a dialect of Tuareg,^[6] and some early sources even confused it with the Northern Songhay languages.^[7] The first published linguistic material on Tetserret was Drouin (1984), and only with Khamed Attayoub's (2001) thesis did it become clear how different Tetserret was from Tuareg.

Tetserret is the only surviving Berber language to share a number of sound shifts with Zenaga of Mauritania.^{[8][9]} It also has non-Tuareg vocabulary found in other Berber languages. For example, *afagan* (man) resembles Central Atlas Tamazight of Morocco; *aiddid* (goatskin container for water) resembles Ghadames of Libya; and *awdosh* (ox) recalls Hassaniya Arabic.

All speakers of Tetserret are bilingual in the Tawellemmet language, which has influenced their language.^[10] As of 2011, Tetserret was no longer being spoken with children, and as such appears endangered.^[11]

Literature

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Tetserret	
Tin Sert	
<i>Tətsərret</i>	
Native to	Niger
Region	Sahara
Ethnicity	Ait-Awari
Native speakers	2,000 (2017) ^[1]
Language family	Afro-Asiatic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berber<ul style="list-style-type: none">Western<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tetserret
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	tez
Glottolog	tets1235 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/tets1235) ^[2]

References

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3. Lux 2011:21, 40
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6. "D'autres Touaregs parlent des langues qui ne sont que des variations dialectales du touareg : shin sar des Aït Awari, talasaghlalt des Kel Eghlal Enniger du sud de l'Azawagh". Bernus, E. 1981. *Touaregs Nigériens : Unité culturelle et diversité régionale d'un peuple pasteur*. Paris: Orstom, p. 72.
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10. Lux 2011:52
11. Lux 2011:54

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